The religious concepts of the Bella Coola are not limited to explanations of strange occurrences, nor to knowledge of a wide range of supernatural beings, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic. Many to whom they believe are invisible and intangible, though none the less powerful. Almost every incident of life is ascribed to the help or hindrance of a supernatural agency. If a fisherman constructs a salmon-weir, with a considerable amount of work, the Bella Coola ascribe his success to the assistance of some supernatural being or supernatural power; mere labour would never have sufficed. If a man has phenomenal success in hunting, it is because the supernatural has helped him in some way. It is not necessary that an anthropomorphic being should appear; they seldom do, but more often that in some form or another supernatural aid have aided the interprise.

This attitude is clearly evidident in Bella Coola beliefs concerning the construction of canoes. Many professions depend upon prerogatives without which a person cannot hope to succeed. This is not true of canoe-makers, although it is a great advantage to one of them if *Yalúlwat*, the Master Carpenter, appeared to his ancestors in the beginning of time. Even without this in many cases a man can succeed in making a canoe if he is aided by a supernatural teacher, or Model Maker. No one knows much about this being, nor even whether there is more than one of them, but it is through his kindly intervention that a man is able to complete his complicated task. If carpenters who have left a half-finished canoe in the woods, hear adze beats, as they are returning to it, they remain away from the spot, knowing that their work is being done with superhuman efficiency by a supernatural artisan. Under such circumstances even a solitary man can construct one of the large, ocean-going canoes. About 1880 an expert carpenter, named *Yalúlw*, was making

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cannot definitely that his mother had told him Mackenzie came down the Dean River when her uncle was a young man. As if to confirm this statement he added the inconsequential detail that Mackenzie, in dire straits for food, killed and ate a dog, and that he was given a garment also the blanket.

one at Namaquasilla Bay. He had reached the point where he needed help to turn the craft over, and one day, returning to his work, he heard the sound of many voices. He waited for a few minutes, and when he reached his canoe it had been turned over as he desired.

On that occasion the beings who assisted the canoe-maker appear to have had definite form, and certainly to have displayed physical strength, but this extreme anthropomorphizing is unusual with respect to the assistance given to carpenters. The construction of a canoe is an arduous and difficult work; the person who has made one is regarded by his fellows with respect mixed with envy, and it is tacitly assumed that he must have received more than human assistance. Considering the number of anthropomorphic beings known to the Bella Coola, it is not surprising that some individuals should assume that the successful carpenter must have had assistance from one of them, but to other Bella Coola the explanation would be in the intangible help vouchsafed to him by some kind of supernatural power.

Similar intangible power is believed to be evident in a person's thoughts. If a man receive either good or evil from a comrade it is his duty and privilege to repay. He intends to do so, but only a good man can carry out the resolution. What a white man would attribute to forgetfulness, procrastination, or lassitude, the Bella Coola say is caused by the intervention of *Snuywalukaista*, who steals away his thoughts. It is doubtful whether this being is considered to have any definite form; rather he is a barrier, normally situated within the doorway of every house. The ideas of a strong man are able to surmount the obstacle, but *Snuywalukaista* abstracts those of a weakling, and directs him to matters of no importance.

Another intangible supernatural being is that which devours firewood. The Bella Coola say that no matter how well a fire may be provided with fuel when a person sits down to a meal, it is certain to be either out, or nearly so, when he has finished eating. The natural explanation does not satisfy

the bow. The bow side then shows an equal outward curvature, and is ready to mark on the opposite side from the mast in front. Each is provided with a suitable pole and also a paddle for use in open water where the river is too deep for poling. The rivers of central British Columbia are shallow, fast-swift, and their navigation requires considerable skill. Going upstream, the captain constantly seeks the smoothest water, where he knows the current will be least strong, and uses his pole to keep the craft headed in the right direction. Should it be caught in a violent eddy, he causes his full strength, and it is his voice that rallies the crew for a final exertion to drive the canoe through. Coming downstream is more dangerous though less wearying. The water is so cold and the current so swift that a capsizing usually causes the drowning of one or more of the occupants, and the captain must never relax. Upset canoes are very stable, and cannot be upset by a faulty distribution of weight. This is essential in one of the rapids, but they are heavy and cumbersome, unsuited to carrying large loads.

When a carpenter wishes to make a canoe, he tells a number of suitable ash and elm of both and branches to leave the natural form available. Slowly and laboriously he chips with his adze until he has followed out the mark to the proper shape, and at the same time has smoothed away the outer surface. Sometimes a small fire is built on the trunk so that it will char the wood beneath and make it easier to remove, but the carpenter must be careful that the flames do not spread too far. Finally, as his work reaches completion, he becomes ever more painstaking than before. The sides and bottom are whittled to a thickness of no more than three inches, and at this stage a faulty stroke may pierce the shell and ruin the toil of weeks. When completed, it is necessary to widen and harden the canoe. A fire is built beside it and stones thrown into the flames to heat; then lifted out and dropped into the water with which the craft has been partly filled. Steam rises, and the carpenter confirms it by covering the canoe with matting, at the same time endeavouring to pull and force the sides apart. Sometimes he can do so by sure muscular effort, more often it is necessary to lay crosswise thwarts within and, by pounding them downwards, extend the sides. No great extension is possible, nor is it required, but the steaming process is considered to harden the wood as well as widen the canoe.

Until five or ten years ago, the Bella Coola made another type of canoe, *ajina*, for use on the ocean. A few examples of this style are still in existence (see Plate 22). Though approximately the same length as river canoes, they are proportionately much deeper and narrower, and an extension downwards near the stern serves in place of a keel. These craft are sufficiently sea-worthy to weather any ordinary storm. Several